

Mythology/Egyptian Mythology/Deities

General Characteristics

Egyptian deities are often portrayed as having animal heads in art; as an example, Anubis is often portrayed in statuary as having the body of a human, but the head of a canine. Many gods were portrayed with different animal heads, depending upon the situation. The Egyptians did not actually believe that most of their gods had animal heads; rather, they portrayed them that way as artistic symbolism. This may have been for the benefit of the illiterate.

Descriptions and Unique Traits



Anubis

; Anubis : God of Embalming, Friend of the Dead, originally god of the dead

Details : The son of Ra and Hathor, Anubis was the first god of the underworld. He was most often portrayed as a man with the head of a jackal but sometimes appeared as fully human or jackal. In later mythology he was replaced as king of the dead by Osiris. Instead he became the gatekeeper to the underworld and protector of souls. One of Anubis's duties was to weigh the heart of the dead against the feather of Ma'at. If the heart weighed the same as the feather, the person being subjected to the test would enter the Field of Reeds, and could enjoy the afterlife. If not they would suffer destruction, and would not exist.

The Aten

the embodiment of the Sun's rays in a brief, monotheistic interlude

Apep

Serpent of the Underworld, enemy of Ra

Atum

a creator deity, and the setting sun

Bastet

Goddess of Cats and Women also called Bast and Ailuros

Bes

God-Demon of Protection, Childbirth and Entertainment

The Four sons of Horus

Protective deities personified in the canopic jars :

*Duamutef

(guardian of the stomach)

*Imsety

(guardian of the liver)

*Hapi

(guardian of the lungs) :

*Qebsennuef

(guardian of the intestine)

Geb

God of the Earth

Hapy

God of the Nile and Fertility

Hathor

Goddess of Love and Music

Heget

Goddess of Childbirth

Horus

The falcon-headed god, son of Osiris and Isis; protects pharaohs

Imhotep

God of wisdom, medicine and magic

Isis

Goddess of Magic, sister of Nephthys

Khepry

the scarab beetle, the embodiment of the dawn

Khnum

a creator deity

Maahes

god of war

Ma'at

Concept of Truth, Balance and Order, sometimes depicted as a goddess. See Anubis for more information on her work in the afterlife.

Menhit

Goddess of war

Min

god of fertility

Mont

god of war

Naunet

the primal waters

Neith

goddess of war, then great mother goddess

Nephthys

mother of Anubis

Nut

goddess of heaven and the sky

Osiris

god of the underworld, fertility and agricultural, maternal brother of Anubis

Details : Osiris was the second king of the underworld and one of the four children of the earth (Geb) and the sky (Nuit), and was the husband of Isis, who represented life. As god of the dead, Babi, the god who devoured unworthy souls, was described as his first-born son. In art, since he was representative of death, Osiris was usually depicted as a mummified man, with a beard, and, as ruler of the underworld, was also given the symbols of kingship - the crown, flail, and crozier. Usually, he also was depicted as having green skin, a reference to rotting flesh, and thus to death.

Ptah

a creator deity

Details : Ptah, in Egyptian mythology (specifically Memphite), is the creator god. He existed before time was time and began the world. His creation of the world was seen as procreative, although he initially existed alone. Due to this fact, his hand was assigned feminine qualities, and was in itself worshipped as a goddess. Ptah was the patron deity of craftsmen, as everything he created was created by his mind alone.

Ra

the sun, possible father of Anubis

Details : For much of Egyptian history, Ra was the chief of gods. He controlled day and night, the passage of time, and the continual cycle of death and rebirth. However, his appearance as the sun god was just one of his many aspects. He was worshipped as a creator, as an ancestor to the pharaohs, and as many other things. He was also called amun ra.

Sekhmet

goddess of war and battles

Sobek

Crocodile God

Details : In Egyptian mythology, Sobek was the crocodile-god who symbolized the fertility of the Nile River. He was also the god of pharaohs and leaders and so was viewed as immensely powerful.

Set

God of Storms, possible father of Anubis, later became god of evil

Details : As the god of the desert, Set was associated with sandstorms, and desert caravans. Due to the extreme hostility of the desert environment, Set was viewed as immensely powerful, and was consequently regarded from time to time as the chief god. In art, Set was mostly depicted as a mysterious and unknown creature, referred to by Egyptologists as the Set animal, with a curved snout, square ears, forked tail, and canine body, or sometimes as a human with only the head of the Set animal. It has no complete resemblance to any known creature, although it does resemble a composite of an aardvark, and a jackal, both of which are desert creatures.

Taweret

Goddess of pregnant children and protector at childbirth

Tefnut

goddess of order, justice, time, Heaven and Hell and weather

Thoth

god of the moon, drawing, writing, geometry, wisdom, medicine, music, astronomy, and magic

Details : Thoth is the Egyptian God of the moon and Wisdom. He is credited in ancient Egyptian mythology as the creator of writing and the scribe of the gods.



Wepwawet

a wolf deity, worshipped in Lycopolis.

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